

Conference center coming to Provo

Project doubles the size of hotel

By MARK EDDINGTON
The Daily Herald

Downtown Provo will receive a facelift and an economic shot in the arm with the \$13 million addition of a "world-class" convention center and suites to the Provo Park Hotel.

Provo Mayor George Stewart and officials from Kahler Realty Corporation and EsNet, the firms that own the hotel, made the announcement at a Tuesday press conference attended by many business and civic leaders.

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Plans were also announced for the construction of the 114-suite Marriott Residence Inn at 295 W. 2230 North.

Construction of the Utah Valley Conference Center and 96 additional suites are scheduled to begin early this summer. By the time it is completed in early 1997, the project will more than double the size of the existing hotel and meeting facilities at 101 W. 100 North. Overall, the facility will contain 28,000 square feet of meeting and convention space, making it one of the largest in the state.

"We want this to be the hotel and conference center for Utah Valley," said Harold Milner, Kah-



UTAH VALLEY
CONFERENCE CENTER
AT THE
PROVO PARK HOTEL
PROVO

where Big Al's Shoe Repair, the Peking House restaurant, several vacant lots and the Home Energy

Marriott to build Residence Inn

By MARK EDDINGTON
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Somewhat lost amid the fanfare surrounding Tuesday's announcement of a \$13 million conference center in downtown Provo is the fact that a new hotel is coming to the Riverbottoms area.

Construction of a new 114-suite Marriott Residence Inn at 295 W. 2230 North will begin late this summer and be completed by the end of 1996. The announcement was made Tuesday by Mayor George Stewart and Harold Milner, president and CEO of Kahler Realty Corporation.

Kahler is a Rochester, Minn., corporation that will co-own the hotel with EsNet, a local investment firm. Kahler and Esnet also co-own the Provo Park Hotel where the new Utah Valley Conference Center and an additional 96 suites will be built.

"Utah is an excellent market for our company," Milner said. "We are happy to invest in the area by building this new Residence Inn."

The inn, which will be a franchise of the Marriott Corporation, will be located adjacent the Riverside Country Club near the Provo River and bike trail. Each suite will be equipped with a full kitchen, including a stove, oven, dishwasher, refrigerator and icemaker. In addition, the facility will feature meeting facilities, an indoor pool, basketball and tennis courts, full laundry services and a

ler president and chief executive officer. "With Micron and everything else that's happening, this valley deserves a world-class conference center. We believe this will do that."

The project will add an eight-story tower to the hotel and Provo's skyline. The first two floors will house the conference center, which will include a ballroom, 10 meeting rooms, a tiered lecture room with 120-150 seats, an executive boardroom and full banquet facilities.

The six top floors will house the new hotel suites, which officials say will be more like apartments than hotel rooms. Besides the bedroom, the suites will feature a parlor, sofa sleeper, food and beverage bar, coffee maker and toaster, modem jack, a large-screen TV and a host of other amenities. The new suites will expand the hotel from 232 to 328 rooms.

The expanded hotel and conference center will extend from the existing facility onto west Center Street, from about 138 to 154 West

Assistance Target office are presently located. The Provo Redevelopment Agency purchased the six lots for roughly \$1 million.

Besides purchasing the lots, Provo is also bringing \$1 million dollars in federal grant money to the deal — money the city received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development last September to help fund the construction of a \$12 million downtown performing arts center. When securing the additional funds proved difficult, the city decided to use it on the Provo Park Hotel instead.

"That is really the catalyst that is enabling us to get started. We wouldn't be doing this without it," Stewart said.

As an added incentive, the city is allowing Kahler, which is based in Rochester, Minn., and EsNet, a Utah investment group, to keep \$1.14-million in sales tax increment to help defray their \$12 million share of the project. The own-

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Top, an artist's rendition shows the \$13 million "world class" convention center and suites that will be added to the Provo Park Hotel at 101 W. 100 North in Provo. Bottom, Harold Miner, presi-

dent and CEO of Kahler Realty Corp., speaks at a press conference announcing the expansion of the Provo hotel and the construction of a Marriott Residence Inn at 295 W. 2230 North, Provo.

Daily Herald Photo/Jason Olson

fitness center. Even though the Residence Inn will be much smaller than the expanded Provo Park Hotel and Utah Valley Conference Center, city officials say they believe it will be vitally important to the city. The new hotel is expected to bring 50 to 60 new jobs to Utah County. It will also help offset the loss of hotels that could be torn down to make way for the fashion mall in south Provo. The city displaced six hotels due to the announcement earlier this year.

Kahler owns five hotels in Utah and 20 nationwide. Once construction on the Residence Inn and the expanded Provo Park Hotel and Utah Valley Conference Center is completed, Kahler will have invested \$100 million in its Utah operations.

Kahler is one of the oldest hotel operating companies in the United States and among the largest in Utah. Once the Residence Inn is completed, the company will have 21 hotels nationwide.

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